

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 20, 2011
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Joe Vitale, Diane Ripple, Shari Campbell, Shirley Wehmeier, Katie Miller, Judy Hickey, Raquel Mehring, Pam Groh, Faith Holley-Beal, Jim Pearson, Debra Wandsnider, Lindsay Wilson (for Amy Baumann), Sarah Matson, Ed Cohen, Barb Holtz, Maura McMahon

STAFF PRESENT: Jesús Mireles, Kathy Mullooly

Diane Ripple called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Introductions were made by and for the new members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Joe Vitale motioned to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2011 meeting. The motion was seconded by Katie Miller.

BOARD LIAISON REPORT

The HHS Board and Committee meeting was held on October 13. Joe reported on the ordinance accepting a \$350,000 grant for the adult drug court. There was an update on Public Health, including a sad note about the rise in the number of children not being immunized. Judy Hickey added that because of that, pertussis is on the rise. There was discussion on immunizations being a parent choice, and the importance of educating the community to make good choices. Sarah Matson said they encourage up to date immunizations at Catholic Charities. She believes there are more studies out now that are scaring parents; i.e. do immunizations cause autism, which could be the cause of more people not immunizing. Shirley Wehmeier stated that they provide educational components and encourage immunizations through Healthy Families. Debra Wandsnider indicated they team with ProHealth nurses on immunizations and education. Joe Vitale said Waukesha County breaks down many barriers and makes it easy to get immunizations.

Also at the Board and Committee meeting, the statistic of the month was on truancy. Intervention and prevention has a big effect. Public Health also presented information regarding death rates, comparing health issues of different races. St. Charles gave a report, which included the Laurer Center.

There is budgeting work going on with the juvenile center, and the girls' juvenile facility will close. There is an amendment on the table to keep girls secure open. It's difficult to defend with the number of girls who attended last year and the staffing requirements to keep it open. Waukesha will contract with Washington County to keep our girls. Jesús commented that the good news is we're doing a good job keeping girls out of such facilities. What's important, Judy Hickey added, is that the girls will have the service available.

ST. CHARLES

Jacquelyn Rice introduced herself from St. Charles. They offer a large umbrella of programs. She is in charge of the treatment foster care program, which is presently in a growth mode. They specialize in placing severely emotionally disturbed and children with cognitive disabilities. They get requests for placements statewide. She is recruiting foster parents, looking beyond their immediate target area. They have several homes in the Racine and Kenosha community. She is recruiting parents who recognize and can manage children's special needs. They have a small staff working to find safe homes and she hopes CAFSAC members can assist in pointing her in the right direction.

Diane asked what kind of training and on-going support they offer. They offer forty hours of training prior to becoming a treatment foster parent, and a minimum of twenty-four hours after. She tries to find individuals who are interested in specific challenges, and even medically trained persons. They work to include the families' other children and help integrate the foster child into the family. She explained the State foster care levels – Level I is Kinship Care, Level II is General Foster Care (children with no special issues), Level III is Treatment Foster Care, and Level V is Institutional Foster Care.

They work with caregivers who understand and have the patience for these dynamics, and they are always in the teaching mode with the treatment foster parents. Some of the children have a dual diagnosis; many are cognitively disabled and have a psychological diagnosis as well. A team of staff work with the parents and the children, and sometimes also involve the biological family, when appropriate. They accept diverse families; i.e. single parents or same sex parents are accepted. The criteria are that they have had parenting experience. Jacquelyn gave some examples of some different family situations. She shared brochures from St. Charles.

Ed asked about the effect of the economic situation today, and asked if she finds people getting into foster care for the stipend. She answered that the State has recently changed the payment reimbursement. Jacquelyn stated that if people are getting into foster care for the money, they are being short-changed. She doesn't have any data to show that that is happening. Ed asked about the number of children in need. She answered they see most children suffering from neglect, resulting from AODA issues and/or mental health issues. She doesn't see an upswing in the numbers recently.

Jesús talked about other treatment foster care agencies doing recruitment, and explained how county social workers work with those treatment foster care agencies. Waukesha County has between 20 and 30 children placed in treatment foster care. Jesús gave licensing information and numbers. There was discussion on relative placements based on the community, and about resources. Jesús encouraged Jacquelyn to contact his foster care coordinator for any follow up issues.

BORN LEARNING

Barb Holtz, presented on a United Way initiative, Born Learning. The program will be funded by United Way for at least another year, but they are to start looking for some of their own

money to keep going. They are a coalition of four agencies. PPAC (Prevention & Protection of Abused Children) is the fiscal agent, the Pregnancy Support Connection, Center for Leadership Excellence, and Lutheran Social Services. The objective is to get information out about very early childhood learning. They do presentations to day care centers, teachers' groups, parents' groups, etc. They are going into their fourth year, and are changing their focus slightly and looking more outwardly. Nationally, it's more of a public awareness initiative. They have set up a tiered program for children ages 0 to 5 years. They have now started to get key messages out to different groups of people. One way is by using posters, which they are promoting to doctors offices and clinics, and which she shared with the group. The intention is to get the word out of the importance of early learning; to have children at the proper developmental age when they are entering school. Early learning is as simple as reading to kids, signing to kids, and creatively playing with kids. Barb distributed the newly printed brochures, which include an insert about the Born Learning Trail. As you follow the trail there are instructions for simple activities for parents to do with their kids, along with an explanation of what the activity is teaching the child. Barb talked about the portable trail and the permanent trail located at Heyer Park (Hwy. 59 and Sunset). There was another brochure distributed explaining why early learning matters, investing time working with children, and how it benefits the children (higher test scores, more success in school, etc.)

Pam asked if they have any data back form the National Center for Learning Excellence. Barb said yes, although it's difficult to measure, they are seeing higher percentages (87%) of kids ready to enter K-5.

Barbara wants to spend more time this year talking to community groups. She would like to expand to outlying communities. Joe thinks it's unfortunate sometimes that some parents need permission to teach their kids, are too formal, or don't understand the importance of this early interaction. He brought up discussion about families somewhere between beginning teaching in the womb and families doing no teaching at all. Barb gave examples of simple, free ideas for activities parents can do with their children. There was discussion about how playing is learning, and some parents don't equate the two. Children have to use their imaginations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Katie Miller shared healthy Halloween handouts and t-shirts from the National Children's Study.

Diane shared parent class flyers. She also announced the fall fashion show to benefit the Women's Center is November 18 at the Country Spring Hotel, and details can be found on the [website](#).

Debra Wandsnider reported that they have had to temporarily close the Sienna House, and are trying to reopen it in the next month or so. They are working with neighborhood businesses. They are talking about 24 hour services in churches as a plan B.

NEXT MEETING

With the new members, agency sharing and collaboration will be discussed at November 17 meeting. Bring brochures from your agencies to share. The November 17th meeting will be held in the BROOKFIELD ROOM in the lower level of the Human Services Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Kathy Mullooly, seconded by Barb Holtz at 9:57 a.m.

Approved on: 11-17-11
Date
